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dence advocated by Professor Maillet. It leaves small place for miracles, though it does not expressly deny the possibility of them. While, therefore, his theory, elaborated so fully and connected at so many points with religious speculation in the past, explains satisfactorily the general course of events as dependent upon both divine and human action, it does not cope with all the difficulties which present themselves to the mind of a believer in Christ. Religion is thought to be the product of divine condescension and of human aspiration, having reached its highest form in Christianity; but just how the person and work of Jesus Christ are interpreted by the author is not perfectly clear.

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DIE KLASSISCHE POESIE UND DIE GÖTTLICHE OFFENBARUNG.
Von D. JULIUS DISSELHOFF. Kaiserswerth a. Rh.: Verlag
der Diakonissen-Anstalt, 1898. Pp. vii + 562. M. 7.50.

THIS posthumous work of a thoroughly competent writer deserves an English translation. It is a contribution to comparative religion, rather than to pure literature. Poetry, as "the mother-tongue of the human race," the author would say, expresses, more completely than either history or philosophy, man's conceptions of reality. Dealing, therefore, with the substance, and not the form, of poetry, he would discover in it the actual attitude of man toward God. In classical poetry, including the poetry of the Iranian and Indian peoples, as well as of the Greeks and Romans, he traces a gradual decline from the early idea of a personal God, above the world and distinct from the world, to that of a God who is scarcely more than the personified elements of nature. Side by side with this growing deterioration in the conception of God he sees a deterioration in the conception of man. Man, too, loses his sense of personality, freedom, responsibility, and can only mourn his bondage to evil, while he sees no power either in himself or in God to deliver him from it.

The lesson drawn from this historical survey is that man needs a special divine revelation. The Gathas of Zarathustra maintain man's spiritual and moral nature, but at the price of losing unity in a thoroughgoing dualism. The author makes no mention of Rhys Davids' contention that the divine Being in the Avesta was originally one, and that "the twins," good and evil, were simply opposing principles of

his nature, which later teachers misinterpreted as eternally existent and warring spirits. But, while in the Iranian highlands man has roused himself to assert his own supernatural dignity and the spirituality of God, there is an antagonistic faith in the unity of things. This faith leads to conflict and separation. A great part of the race goes eastward and southward to serve the deified forces of nature. On the banks of the Ganges the Indian peoples sought to express the principle of receptivity, to rest from self-determination and its struggles, and to invest their gods with the same qualities which they desired in themselves. They sought unity, and they found it in a common source of good and of evil. This extinguished the sense of personality, and made the loss of selfhood the highest attainment. Evil has its deepest root in Brahma himself; hence there can be no redemption from it.

In a similar way our author represents Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar as recognizing an objective divine personality, though this personality is infected with the same weakness, anxiety and sin, which man finds in himself. The justice of God is believed in, more than his love. The term God is used, without the naming of any particular deity. The tragedians, *Æschylus* and *Sophocles*, regard God as the guardian of all moral laws; yet this God is unequal to his task: he punishes, but he does not admit to his favor. There is no reconciliation of the sinner with offended deity, nor is there renewal of nature in those who are punished. Sin is in the nature—it is not the result of man's self-perversion. The nature cannot be freed from sin, because this would involve destruction of the nature itself. Euripides cannot endure these contradictions and shortcomings of the old theology. He is skeptical, and pretends to bow to the gods, while he is really criticising them. Hence no one of his plays is a complete work of art, for skepticism mars and destroys poetry. In Euripides we see poetry going over from theism to pantheism.

Aristophanes, in comic form, but with tragic earnestness, stood for the old faith in a personal godhead. But comedy could not succeed, any more than tragedy, so long as the accompanying conception of the gods as nature-powers remained uncorrected. The poet could laugh at the low anthropomorphic popular conceptions, but he could not substitute any that were essentially better. And the philosophy of Socrates and Plato was equally powerless. It led men into a pantheism farther from the true God than that to which poetry had led. Nor could Rome accomplish what Greece had failed in. The external constraint of Roman law and organization could not renew the human spirit, and

the poetry of Vergil, which makes Rome the type of divine providence, only broke down more completely the boundaries between God and nature. Horace represents an absolute humanism to which the gods are only names. He is graceful and amiable, but he is also hopeless of the future. He confesses that the Roman world, with all its external greatness, is irrecoverably corrupt and lost. Rome, as Livy had said, cannot endure either her vices or their remedies.

And so the classical poetry which has run this course confesses its own insufficiency as an expression of the truth with regard both to God and to man. Man needs not so much instruction as example. The personality of God and his distinctness from nature need to be shown by an incarnation of God in humanity. Man's freedom must be demonstrated by one in whom the law appears drawn out in living characters. Dr. Disselhoff has given to the world a new and valuable argument for the divinity of the Christian system in his elaborate demonstration from the poetry of the ante-Christian and extra-Jewish world that the humanity which is ever groping after God cannot, without special divine revelation, find him. His copious citation of passages from the poets makes this book an excellent handbook and directory for the study of the history of religion.

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THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF GOD: an Enquiry into the Origins of Religion. By GRANT ALLEN. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1897. Pp. viii + 447. \$3.

"As it costs but little to make generalizations," says somewhere Mr. Burke, "they may as well be brilliant." Generalizations concerning the origin of the idea of God and of religion as frequently appear as Richmonds confronted Richard Third on the field of Bosworth. Totemism, androgynism, or sex relation, deification of the dead, are successively exploited as the fundamental element of religion, the genesis of the idea of God. Mr. Grant Allen attempts to rescue the ghost theory of Herbert Spencer from the discredit into which it has fallen. The form of religion is mistaken for its essence; the occasion of its manifestation is confounded with the ultimate principle. Pathology is substituted for psychology. Primitive and advanced psychology undergo a violent breach of continuity. The Aristotelian